

Adriana Herrera: text for group exhibit "*Affective Architectures, Venezuela*", Curated by Aluna Curatorial Collective. PINTA 2018, Miami, Florida, USA.

Paul Amundarain, Milton Becerra, Ángela Bonadies, Juan José Olavarría, Muu Blanco, Miguel Braceli, Susy Iglicki, Vasco Szinetar, and Raquel Soffer.

Cities —those large extensions of the cavern— respond to the primal need for refuge that originated architecture. But though we do not inhabit an ideal world, there are space-times in which the darkness of history and power lurk over cities, turning them into scenes beset by violence. Numerous Latin American artists have traced in buildings the signs of the collapse of the continent: the phantom of modernity never fully built, and the paradox of cities that expel their inhabitants.

The curatorial project *Affective Architectures. Venezuela* explores the "chronotope" of Caracas, the Venezuelan capital, in the last decades: A once thriving city, synonymous with great modernist dreams —although never with social equilibrium— that under the illusion of political reforms entered a process of architectural decline. This decline is a sign of its besiegement by a voracious and violent power that accelerated its fall from within. The works of this group of Venezuelan artists reveal a new topology of Caracas under the harassment of uncontrollable forces. Through multiple photographic practices, they address the aesthetics of ruin, which are no longer —or not only— associated with the failed promises of modernity, but with the effects of a political dystopia.

In the late 70s, **Milton Becerra's** interventions on urban ruins with segments of the construction grid of modernity were already a warning sign about urban crises and the future social catastrophe. Two decades later, **Muu Blanco's** landscape abstractions are based on quick photographs —sometimes taken from his vehicle— of the once iconic buildings of Caracas. From a playful constructive, he continues to track historical vertigo in the 21st century. The interventions in the photographic records of **Susy Iglicki**, which may include juxtapositions of natural disasters, geographies of the uncertain, turn architecture into fictions capable of revealing the fissures of the national reality. **Raquel Soffer** documents urban constants like the hanging light cables that originate formal abstractions, photographic "drawings" of deterioration in the stained Caracas sky. **Vasco Szinetar's** photographs affectively recount the daily experience of traveling the city that Cerro El Ávila guards, and seeing it crumble corner by corner, become a "taken city," increasingly alien and more hostile to its inhabitants. **Ángela Bonadies** and **Juan José Olavarría** delve into one of those great abandoned projects: the unfinished "Tower of David." They capture the outside and the inside of its spaces, inhabited as an affirmation of life in the midst of social neglect. **Paul Amundarain** appropriates the artistic language of the era of splendor of the University City and modern art, but his allusion to kinetic works is contaminated by aerial images of the slums of Caracas. **Miguel Braceli** did one of the last public interventions of this unfortunate time in the Plaza Caracas: a participatory action that invited the public to build "a common area." The documentary record —of great formal beauty— captures an atmosphere of desolation, but the action itself reactivates the relationship between ethics and aesthetics. This is precisely what the works that make up *Affective Architectures. Venezuela* share: they are creative ways of defending the "taken city."

